Every Iron Maiden Song Ranked From Worst to Best

Scroll through the gallery to see how we ranked every song Iron Maiden have written.

EMI

165. "The Angel and the Gambler" - 'Virtual XI' (1998)

The Blaze Bayley era of Iron Maiden coincided with a massive downturn in the acceptance of ‘80s heavy metal. The band was clearly struggling, and “The Angel and the Gambler” is the biggest miss of their career from the chintzy “Baba O’Reilly” ripoff to the cartoon soundboard orchestration to the painstakingly repetitive chorus that goes on for three minutes more than it should have. Now, onto better things...

EMI

164. "Weekend Warrior" - 'Fear of the Dark' (1992)

If there’s one thing we didn’t want Iron Maiden to write a song about, it was football (they call it “football,” we call it “soccer”). Okay, football hooliganism in this case, but “Weekend Warrior” was still a lyrical square peg in a heavy metal world full of dragon and/or spaceship-shaped holes. Just so you know. (DL)

EMI

163. "I Live My Way" - 'The X Factor' (1995)

Only available on the 12-inch vinyl version of the “Man On The Edge” single, “I Live My Way” probably wins an award for being one of the most obscure Maiden songs. Sadly, it’s not one of the most memorable. (DL)

EMI

162. "Burning Ambition" - "Running Free" Single (1980)

Easily the worst song Maiden recorded with Paul Di’Anno, it doesn’t fit in with the rest of the output from that era. Had they continued down this road, they’d be little more than a mainstream leaning hard rock band. It makes an interesting B-side to “Running Free,” but we’re glad it didn’t make the cut for the band’s flawless self-titled debut. (BI)

EMI

161. "Nodding Donkey Blues" - 'Fear of the Dark' (1992)

Iron Maiden never were a blues band but they definitely know how to have fun with the genre. This B-side to “Be Quick Or Be Dead” is a prime

example. Let’s just say that this song is kind of their tongue-in-cheek version of “Whole Lotta Rosie.” Bonus: a boogie-woogie piano solo, during which Bruce deadpans “There should be some kind of guitar solo here…” (BI)

EMI

160. "Quest for Fire" - 'Piece of Mind' (1983)

Welcome to the worst Iron Maiden song of the ‘80s. Films have provided Maiden with rich lyrical inspiration, but on “Quest for Fire,” they tread in the shallowest of waters, nicking the 1981 film of the same name (which was adapted from the 1911 book of the same name) for a source material. It’s a ham-fisted attempt to write about early man’s discovery of fire and the subsequent pursuit for those precious embers, but it comes across as a drunken studio romp rife with hokey riffing and bottom-feeding lyrics. For all the classics Harris gave us, he’s earned at least one pass. He’s lucky “The Trooper” is also on ‘Piece of Mind.’ (JD)

EMI

159. "Como Estais Amigos" - 'Virtual XI' (1998)

It turned out to be Blaze Bayley’s swan song, but “Como Estasis Amigos” was one of the few songs on ‘Virtual XI’ that really put his voice to good use. Unfortunately, the album’s thin sonics and fatal lack of urgency made this a less emotional finale than it could’ve been. (DL)

EMI

158. "Black Bart Blues" - "Can I Play With Madness" Single (1988)

The B-side to “Can I Play With Madness?” could have been called “OK, Now I’m Playing With Madness!” It’s easy to imagine that, after working on the heavy and proggy ‘Seventh Son Of A Seventh Son,’ Maiden wanted to have some light-hearted fun. This Van Halen-like jam definitely is fun, and also pretty bonkers: the lyrics are about “Black Bart,” allegedly a suit of armor that the band picked up on their adventures. Somehow Bart meets a woman with a mysterious background: “Don't know where she's been/Maybe she's an acrobat/Spends her evenings dancing on a pole.” If that’s not weird enough, Bruce Dickinson argues with a high pitched character during the song, and just when you think that the song is finished, Nicko McBrain takes over and screws around for about two more minutes. It’s too weird to describe, but you can find the track on YouTube and check it out. (BI)

EMI

157. "The Apparition" - 'Fear of the Dark' (1992)

One of those songs that probably seemed like a good idea at the time, “The Apparition” brought a staccato funk vibe to the Maiden table. Something like that, anyway. The instrumental and solo sections are great, but the verses verge on a confused mess. (DL)

EMI

156. "Virus" - 'Best of the Beast' (1996)

As if ‘The X-Factor’ wasn’t grim and harrowing enough, the stand-alone single that followed it took Maiden into even more hopeless, anguished territory. Blaze Bayley does his best to keep the whole thing cracking along, but it’s essentially a monochrome dirge with no real tune. (DL)

EMI

155. "No Prayer for the Dying" - 'No Prayer for the Dying' (1990)

Easily the weakest album the band have made with Bruce on board, ‘No Prayer For The Dying’ was sold to fans as a ‘back-to-basics’ affair. The reality was that much of it sounded unimaginative and half-baked. The title track, while eminently likable, is almost certainly not on your Maiden Spotify playlist. (DL)

EMI

154. "Don't Look to the Eyes of a Stranger" - 'Virtual XI' (1998)

Needlessly drawn out and powered by some rather pedestrian riffs that surely wouldn’t have made the grade on earlier Maiden albums, “Don’t Look To The Eyes Of A Stranger” stumbles on its own complexity and has an ending that doesn’t work. (DL)

EMI

153. "Roll Over Vic Vella" - 'Fear of the Dark' (1992)

A semi-cover of Chuck Berry’s “Roll Over Beethoven” with new lyrics about the band’s roadie, Vic Vella. Chuck Berry covers, unsurprisingly, aren’t Iron Maiden’s strong suit. On the other hand, it’s better than Judas Priest’s “Johnny B. Goode.” (BI)

EMI

152. "Hooks in You" - 'No Prayer for the Dying' (1990)

Adrian Smith has written so many songs that are vastly better than “Hooks In You” that it seems a bit pointless to mention it at all. But we must, if only to celebrate the phrase “New ideas for the décor tonight!” Never thought we’d hear Bruce sing that, to be fair. (DL)

EMI

151. "Wasting Love" - 'Fear of the Dark' (1992)

A well-intended but unsatisfying ballad on ‘Fear Of The Dark,’ an album that had plenty of much more exciting moments, “Wasting Love” is both

an overlong showcase for Bruce Dickinson’s voice and a good excuse to go and make some tea. (DL)

EMI

150. "The Educated Fool" - 'Virtual XI' (1998)

Stymied by its anaemic production and a palpable lack of killer material, ‘Virtual XI’ isn’t without its merits and “The Educated Fool” boasts at least one great melody to justify its inclusion. Compared to “The Clansman,” however, it’s not up to scratch. (DL)

Parlaphone

149. "Tears of a Clown" - 'The Book of Souls (2015)

Briefly played during Maiden’s ‘Book Of Souls’ live campaign, this self-explanatory salute to troubled funny men is yet another great example of Adrian Smith’s subtly subversive contributions to the Maiden sound. But a Smokey Robinson cover would have been much funnier, if we’re honest. (DL)

EMI

148. "El Dorado" - 'The Final Frontier' (2010)

It starts with what sounds like an ending: a typically contrary Maiden move, let’s face it. “El Dorado” is not one of the band’s greatest singles, but it did win a Grammy for Best Metal Performance in 2011. So hooray for that. (DL)

EMI

147. "Out of the Shadows" - 'A Matter of Life and Death' (2006)

Brimming with moments of unashamed prog abandon, this oddity gave ‘A Matter Of Life And Death’ one of its rare moments of emotional respite, albeit mainly because Steve Harris’ bass-line is so goddamn hypnotic. (DL)

EMI

146. "Fortunes of War" - 'The X Factor' (1995)

After a relatively exciting opening triumvirate of new songs, ‘The X-Factor’ slows down for “Fortunes Of War” and loses practically all of its momentum. The lyrics are brooding and full of quiet rage, but the music beneath them is not among Maiden’s finest five minutes. (DL)

EMI

145. "The Aftermath" - 'The X Factor' (1995)

The lumbering nadir of ‘The X-Factor,’ “The Aftermath” arrives after “Fortunes Of War” and “Look For The Truth” have already drained your lifesblood. The longest, darkest and least memorable of the three, it does at least hammer home the point that Steve Harris was in a terrible mood. (DL)

EMI

144. "Mother Russia" - 'No Prayer for the Dying' (1990)

By 1990, Maiden fans were used to the band’s albums containing a grandiose epic or two. But after the glories of “Rime Of The Ancient Mariner” and “Seventh Son Of A Seventh Son,” “Mother Russia” was a slight anti-climax. You can bet Dimmu Borgir liked it, though. (DL)

EMI

143. "Childhood's End" - 'Fear of the Dark' (1992)

There are more than a few unsung gems lurking on Maiden’s less celebrated albums, and the skewed goth-prog splendour of “Childhood’s End” is firmly among them. By no means a classic, it does give ‘Fear Of The Dark’ a rare moment of forward-thinking oomph. (DL)

EMI

142. "Look for the Truth" - 'The X Factor' (1995)

The big downfall of ‘The X-Factor’ is the prolonged period of slow, miserable songs halfway through. “Look For The Truth” is particularly weak, with predictable chord changes serving only to hammer home the lack of a genuinely punchy melody. (DL)

EMI

141. "Listen With Nicko, Part XI" - 'No Prayer for the Dying' (1990)

Nicko McBrain: he’s just ahead of his time. He was a podcaster decades before podcasts (or even iPods). On 1990’s ‘The First Ten Years’ box set, he recorded a bunch of monologues as bonus tracks. They were so popular (or, at least, someone told Nicko that they were), that he recorded another one as a bonus track for ‘No Prayer For The Dying.’ Note to Nicko: the world needs to know about your comedic brilliance. Seriously, please start a podcast. (BI)

EMI

140. "Age of Innocence" - 'Dance of Death' (2003)

"Age of Innocence" finds Iron Maiden returning to the well of film and literature to vent their frustrations with the world and its rocky systems of government. The vitriol here is fairly shallow though, echoing the same tired sentiments of countless citizens of the world and while, yes, its certainly angsty with some aggressive riffing, it's not very inspired. (JD)

EMI

139. "The Man Who Would Be King" - 'The Final Frontier' (2010)

With Dave Murray’s ultra-melodic instincts all over it, the penultimate epic from ‘The Final Frontier’ veers from swooshing keys and a disembodied Bruce floating in the haze to long stretches of full-on Maiden bombast, replete with what sound like post-In Flames harmonies. That’s a joke for our older readers, by the way. (DL)

EMI

138. "For the Greater Good of God" - 'A Matter of Life and Death' (2006)

Steve Harris loves a good epic. He also loves a heart-wrenching war story. This nine-minute sprawl from ‘A Matter Of Life And Death’ combines the two to chilling and faintly morose effect. Resurrected for the current “Legacy Of The Beast” tour, it’s not a party banger. (DL)

EMI

137. "2 A.M." - 'The X Factor' (1995)

One slow, sad song too many for most fans, when they reached the end of Maiden’s most emotionally gruelling album, “2 A.M.” works best in isolation. A pretty but spiky ballad, beautifully sung by Blaze, it’s a straightforward outpouring of melancholy and angst. (DL)

EMI

136. "Mission From 'Arry" - "2 Minutes to Midnight" Single (1984)

Although Bruce Dickinson doesn’t appear on this recording, we have him to thank for it. “Mission From ‘Arry” is a recording of a pretty intense (but funny) argument between Steve Harris (a.k.a. “‘Arry”) and Nicko McBrain that Bruce was kind enough to record for the rest of us; it reached the public as a b-side to “2 Minutes To Midnight.” Apparently, during a gig, Steve Harris’ bass gear broke down, and he sent a roadie to tell McBrain to extend his drum solo while they were fixing it. The moral of the story is: don’t interrupt a drummer DURING the solo. But if you do, be sure to record the ensuing brawl. (BI)

EMI

135. "The Pilgrim" - 'A Matter of Life and Death' (2006)

Arguably the runt of the ‘A Matter Of Life And Death’ litter, “The Pilgrim” is an essential part of the album but not a song you’re likely to whistle in the shower. Fast-paced and edgy, it’s every bit as progressive as the songs around it, but lacks one truly heart-stopping moment. (DL)

EMI

134. "Dance of Death" - 'Dance of Death' (2003)

Lauded and loathed in equal measure for being a little bit too close to Spinal Tap’s “Stonehenge” routine for comfort, “Dance Of Death” wears its prog rock influences with pride and really doesn’t care if you like songs about wizards or not. So there. (DL)

EMI

133. "Déjà Vu" - 'Somewhere in Time' (1986)

One of the fastest tracks on ‘Somewhere In Time,’ “Déjà vu” is much loved by Maiden fans of a certain age, partly because it’s a rare Dave

Murray/Steve Harris co-write (we nerds love this shit) and partly because the twin-lead moments are spectacular. The lyrics are a bit daft, however. (DL)

EMI

132. "Chains of Misery" - 'Fear of the Dark' (1992)

Uncomfortably close to the kind of one-dimensional metal that Maiden had always avoided, “Chains Of Misery” is unusual for the band’s decision to use gang vocals in the chorus. Worth a try, perhaps, but it doesn’t really work. This is more filler than killer. (DL)

EMI

131. "Judgement of Heaven" - 'The X Factor' (1995)

A song that just about saves ‘The X-Factor’ from falling asleep at the wheel, “Judgement Of Heaven” has a killer chorus that is sadly not quite matched by the rest of the tune. A great vocal from Blaze Bayley, however, and a wistfully quasi-spiritual lyric thrown in for free. (DL)

Parlaphone

130. "When the Rivers Runs Deep" - 'The Book of Souls (2015)

A strong candidate for the weakest track on ‘The Book Of Souls,’ “When The River Runs Deep” just about earns its place on Maiden’s latest album thanks to a brilliantly off-the-wall Adrian Smith solo four minutes in. (DL)

EMI

129. "Sheriff of Huddersfield" - 'Somewhere in Time' (1986)

Maiden’s best B-sides have generally been spirited covers or, very occasionally, the sound of grown men dicking about. A tribute to manager Rod Smallwood that pulls no punches about the great man’s reported miserliness, it’s actually a half-decent song (with stupid lyrics). (DL)

EMI

128. "The Reincarnation of Benjamin Breeg" - 'A Matter of Life and Death' (2006)

The first song to be released from ‘A Matter Of Life And Death,’ this dark, heavy and seemingly unlikely single arrived tied to some vague

promotional scheme involving a the mysterious identity of the song’s titular hero. No, we don’t know how that worked out either. (DL)

EMI

127. "Journeyman" - 'Dance of Death' (2003)

Maiden’s much-vaunted leap into acoustic territory was one of Dance Of Death’s most memorable moments. With a vague hint of Jethro Tull and a large dollop of world-weary resignation, “Journeyman” worked pretty well live, too. (DL)

EMI

126. "The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner" - 'Somewhere in Time' (1986)

Another Steve Harris composition reportedly inspired by his voracious movie-watching habits, this rapacious epic may pale beside the better songs on ‘Somewhere In Time,’ but it’s still a riot of spiralling leads and lithe, rhythmic wallop. (DL)

EMI

125. "Lord of the Flies" - 'The X Factor' (1995)

It’s never been that hard to keep track of Steve Harris’ reading and watching habits. This song’s thematic debt to William Golding’s legendary novel was fully in keeping with the dark aesthetic of ‘The X-Factor,’ but Maiden have seldom sounded less chirpy. (DL)

EMI

124. "Holy Smoke" - 'No Prayer for the Dying' (1990)

Belatedly addressing the TV preacher phenomenon with no great subtlety, “Holy Smoke” is not one of Maiden’s best singles, but it is notable for boasting (a) a rare sighting of a curse word in a Maiden song (Bruce says ‘shit!’) and (b) one of the best/worst videos ever made. (DL)

EMI

123. "Satellite 15... The Final Frontier" - 'The Final Frontier' (2010)

Opinion was split on the values of “Satellite 15,” a noisy futuristic intro with jarring programmed drums, and it still sounds like what it was (an Adrian Smith demo), but “The Final Frontier” is a nuts-out, sky-punching Maiden anthem, so it’s not all bad news. (DL)

EMI

122. "Justice of the Peace" - 'The X Factor' (1995)

A Murray/Harris co-write confined to the b-side on the second of two CD single versions of “Man On The Edge” (it was a confusing time to be alive, folks), this fair-to-middling rabble-rouser is arguably more exciting than a good third of ‘The X-Factor.’ Just saying. (DL)

EMI

121. "Fates Warning" - 'No Prayer for the Dying' (1990)

Literally no one’s favourite Maiden song, “Fates Warning” was probably not named after the iconic progressive metal band, not least because it lacks a single interesting musical idea. A major low point in the first Bruce era, you just can’t whistle it in the shower, can you? (DL)

EMI

120. "The Mercenary" - 'Brave New World' (2000)

On an album full of joyful demonstrations of their renewed prowess, Iron Maiden could probably have left “The Mercenary” off ‘Brave New World,’

simply because it’s the kind of song you suspect they can write in their collective sleep. (DL)

EMI

119. "The Unbeliever" - 'The X Factor' (1995)

Tucked at the back-end of somewhat overlong ‘The X-Factor,’ “The Unbeliever” may be a song that many fans never quite got round to listening to. But they should: it’s a scowling, nihilistic affair with some neat proggy touches. (DL)

Parlaphone

118. "Death or Glory" - 'The Book of Souls (2015)

Custom built for live performance, “Death Or Glory” saw Adrian Smith reasserting himself as master of brevity and bombast. Bruce Dickinson’s instruction to “climb like a monkey” never made a great deal of sense, but this is heavy metal, not chemistry. (DL)

EMI

117. "Afraid to Shoot Strangers" - 'Fear of the Dark' (1992)

Perhaps against the odds, this rambling epic has made occasional visits to Maiden’s set lists over the last 25 years. It’s a tense and turbulent war story, the horrors of the Gulf War brought eloquently to life by Steve Harris. (DL)

EMI

116. "Invaders" - 'The Number of the Beast' (1982)

Few would argue that “Invaders” is a classic like “Run To The Hills” or “The Number Of The Beast,” but it’s hard to imagine Maiden’s triumphant 1982 breakthrough album without this mad-eyed, riff-driven ambush as its starting point.

EMI

115. "New Frontier" - 'Dance of Death' (2003)

Three decades after joining Iron Maiden, Nicko McBrain earned his first writing credit on the ‘Frankenstein’-inspired “New Frontier.” The track’s kicking energy and single-leaning approach is the last bit of joy to be found as darkness looms large over the ensuing four tracks that close out the ‘Dance of Death’ record. Despite its charm, it doesn’t have as much staying power on the dynamic recording, but it’s always a fun one when it pops up either on shuffle or when cruising through ‘Dance of Death.’ (JD)

EMI

114. "Man on the Edge" - 'The X Factor' (1995)

The first Blaze Bayley-fronted Maiden song to be released, “Man On The Edge” came as a great relief to many diehards. Spiky and aggressive, its re-imagining of Michael Douglas’ peerless film ‘Falling Down’ gave ‘The X-Factor’ some much needed energy. (DL)

EMI

113. "From Here to Eternity" - 'Fear of the Dark' (1992)

A disappointingly prosaic rock and roller from the intermittently great ‘Fear Of The Dark,’ this mostly unloved single always seemed a bit unimaginative, especially since only four years had passed since ‘Seventh Son Of A Seventh Son.’ (DL)

EMI

112. "These Colours Don't Run" - 'A Matter of Life and Death' (2006)

Sharon Osbourne may deserve a songwriting credit on “These Colours Don’t Run,” since the track wouldn’t exist without her egging of Iron Maiden at Ozzfest 2005. Named after the sentiment Bruce Dickinson aired onstage, “These Colours Don’t Run” is another solid wartime effort from Maiden worthy of its seven minute run time. (GH)

EMI

111. "The Edge of Darkness" - 'The X Factor' (1995)

One of several moody, predominantly slow-paced epics that Steve Harris wrote to showcase Blaze Bayley’s powerful, gritty voice, this was a highlight of the underrated second half of ‘The X-Factor,’ albeit not one you’d necessarily play at a party. (DL)

EMI

110. "Wildest Dreams" - 'Dance of Death' (2003)

Maiden went through a period where every new album seemed to be preceded by a short, snappy three-to-four-minute sing-along single. “Wildest Dreams” isn’t one of the band’s best but it served its purpose perfectly well as a set opener on the ‘Dance Of Death’ tour. (DL)

Rock Hard

109. "Invasion" - 'The Soundhouse Tapes' (1979)

Blustery and naïve it may be, but “Invasion” is an exciting snapshot of early Maiden, when harnessing the energy of punk at least seemed to be part of the band’s modus operandi. Revered for its presence on ‘The Soundhouse Tapes’ alone, it’s basically impossible to dislike. (DL)

EMI

108. "The Fallen Angel" - 'Brave New World' (2000)

There’s nothing wrong with ‘The Fallen Angel.” It’s a sturdy Maiden anthem with some great riffs and a huge chorus. It’s just nowhere near as life-affirming as “The Wicker Man” or other classics from ‘Brave New World.’ So there’s that. (DL)

EMI

107. "The Assassin" - 'No Prayer for the Dying' (1990)

One of the most adventurous and distinctive songs on ‘No Prayer For The Dying,’ “The Assassin” was a little out of place on an otherwise disappointingly straightforward album. Worth a second glance, it offers faint clues to Maiden’s eventual rebirth as prog metal overlords. (DL)

EMI

106. "Gates of Tomorrow" - 'Dance of Death' (2003)

A decent showcase for the occasional Harris/Dickinson/Gers team-up, “Gates Of Tomorrow” is a no-nonsense stormer that was perhaps too firmly rooted in trad Maiden territory to stand out amid the gently eclectic menu offered up by ‘Dance Of Death.’ (DL)

Parlaphone

105. "The Man of Sorrows" - 'The Book of Souls (2015)

All glory to Mr. Dave Murray on this one. The guitarist’s legato technique is flawless and unparalleled as notes elegantly blossom from his smooth, overtly-melodic delivery. He sets the mood on “The Man of Sorrows” (not to be confused with Bruce’s ‘Accident of Birth’ solo track, “Man of Sorrows”), with his fluttering lead work and the song quickly takes on a theme of hope enveloped in uncertainty with striding rhythms, bombastic synths and melancholic melodies. (JD)

EMI

104. "Face in the Sand" - 'Dance of Death' (2003)

‘Dance Of Death’ was a strange combination of classic Maidenisms and unexpected left-turns. “Face In The Sand” takes an age to get going, but its Floyd-esque slow-build suits the darker intent of mature Maiden perfectly. Extra points for Nicko’s thudding double-kicks. (DL)

EMI

103. "The Fugitive" - 'Fear of the Dark' (1992)

A song that promises much but delivers slightly less, “The Fugitive” is a classic Steve Harris anthem: straight-ahead riffs and linear lyrics, with a bonus detour into moderately proggy territory for the song’s actually rather brilliant instrumental mid-section. (DL)

EMI

102. "When Two Worlds Collide" - 'Virtual XI' (1998)

Contrary to received wisdom, there are lots of cool moments on ‘Virtual XI’ and the spooky intro to “When Two Worlds Collide” is one of them. Unfortunately, the song then lumbers when it should soar, its relatively lively chorus and neat harmonies somehow lacking that essential Maiden spark. (DL)

EMI

101. "Different World" - 'A Matter of Life and Death' (2006)

Unashamedly saluting the melodic power of Thin Lizzy, the opening track on ‘A Matter Of Life And Death’ is a straightforwardly incisive exercise in hard rock songwriting and strong evidence that Bruce Dickinson should sing in a lower register more often. (DL)

EMI

100. "Mother of Mercy" - 'The Final Frontier' (2010)

Reaffirming Bruce Dickinson’s ability to hit notes that only dogs can hear, “Mother Of Mercy” is not an obvious highlight of ‘The Final Frontier,’ but it boasts a performance from Bruce that will cheerfully take the paint from your walls. The closing riff is enjoyably gnarly, too. (DL)

EMI

99. "Blood on the World's Hands" - 'The X Factor' (1995)

‘The X-Factor’ is an album of shadowy terrors and slow-motion menace, but it also has its fair share of quirky moments. “Blood On The World’s Hands” starts with one of Steve Harris’ trademark, rough-hewn bass solos and then transforms into a grinding, epic anti-ballad. (DL)

EMI

98. "The Nomad" - 'Brave New World' (2000)

One of several Maiden songs to transport us all to a vast, bleak and sun-ravaged desert, “The Nomad” gave ‘Brave New World’ its most sumptuously epic moment. A tribute to “The rider of the desert sands,” its opulent sprawl deftly matches the subject matter, scorched grain for grain. (DL)

EMI

97. "Judgement Day" - 'The X Factor' (1995)

A common complaint about ‘The X Factor’ was the lack of direct, tight songs as Maiden toiled away in plaintive moods and quiet, drawn-out buildups without much meat dangling from the sparing hooks. If fans had been greeted with “Judgement Day,” a fiery rocker on par with “Be Quick or Be Dead” which was cut from the album, the reception may well have been warmer. But we can’t fault the band for opting to present something entirely new rather than cling to their own coattails as metal was in the midst of its most trying era. (JD)

EMI

96. "The Duellists" - 'Powerslave' (1984)

Seldom as a swash been more robustly buckled than on this rapier-wielding brute from ‘Powerslave.’ More an excuse for Smith and Murray to solo like madmen than one of Maiden’s more focused tunes, it still blazes (no pun intended) with the classic mid-‘80s line-up’s customary force. (DL)

Parlaphone

95. "Shadows of the Valley" - 'The Book of Souls (2015)

Easy to ignore, amid the many splendours of ‘The Book Of Souls,’ “Shadows Of The Valley” would have been a highlight on a lesser record: it’s a belligerent, pugilistic swarm of riffs and vocal athleticism, with a faint Thin Lizzy-esque twinkle in its climactic blur of harmonised leads. (DL)

EMI

94. "Lightning Strikes Twice" - 'Virtual XI' (1998)

Iron Maiden’s second and last album with Blaze Bayley upfront was largely misguided, looking for a sense of direction after the gloomy ‘The X Factor.’ Harris received little songwriting support from his bandmates on ‘Virtual XI’ and the usually reserved Murray earned two credits, one of them coming on “Lightning Strikes Twice,” a largely overlooked track that showed some real promise for the then-current state of the band if they had stuck to more typical songs with familiar tactics and sing-song guitar leads. But just when they had found a groove for their baritone singer to settle into, they parted ways with him. (JD)

EMI

93. "Losfer Words (Big 'Orra)" - 'Powerslave' (1984)

Goofy title aside, this rambunctious instrumental from ‘Powerslave’ is routinely dismissed as throwaway filler, but its place along the album’s 52-minute timeline makes perfect sense and the record would be unimaginable without it. Even though it’s still goofy. (DL)

EMI

92. "Public Enema Number One" - 'No Prayer for the Dying' (1990)

Maiden are rarely at their best when dealing with real world social issues (see also “Weekend Warrior”) and this song’s silly title is only the tip of the iceberg. As with several other ‘No Prayer For The Dying’ cuts, “Public Enema Number One” lacks a strong chorus and surely would never have made the cut on Maiden’s earlier (or indeed later) albums. (DL)

EMI

91. "No More Lies" - 'Dance of Death' (2003)

A brooding Harris diatribe set to some of post-millennial Maiden’s most strident riffing, “No More Lies” became an unlikely favourite on the ‘Dance Of Death’ tour. Later released as a single, it’s an unfairly dismissed highlight of the band’s early 21st century activities. (DL)

EMI

90. "Tailgunner" - 'No Prayer for the Dying' (1990)

It’s hard not to see “Tailgunner” as a weaker cousin to “Aces High,” but it was a decent stab at returning to the world of aerial conflict and one of the less ploddy moments on ‘No Prayer For The Dying.’ Significantly, it hit harder and audibly grew in stature when performed live. (DL)

EMI

89. "Alexander the Great" - 'Somewhere in Time' (1986)

Maiden fans of a certain vintage have always bemoaned the band’s failure to stick this long, lost classic into the set list. A few clumsy lyrical moments aside, “Alexander The Great” is one of the great Maiden epics: a gripping history lesson set to grandiloquent and inventive heavy metal. (DL)

EMI

88. "Futureal" - 'Virtual XI' (1998)

‘Virtual XI’ was such a patchy affair that invigorating thumpers like this one were all-too-easily overlooked. Despite being stifled by its thin production values, ‘Futureal’ motors along with a full complement of Maiden oomph, delivering a chorus of robust quality and giving Blaze Bayley a chance to fully let rip. (DL)

EMI

87. "Montségur" - 'Dance of Death' (2003)

A rollicking postcard from the Albigensian Crusades of the mid-13thcentury – and we all remember those, don’t we? - this ‘Dance Of Death’ cut is full of steely bombast and prime Maiden thunder. Not a classic, but a satisfying earful nonetheless. (DL)

EMI

86. "The Legacy" - 'A Matter of Life and Death' (2006)

The monolithic, bewildering full stop at the end of ‘A Matter Of Life And Death,’ you would never know that “The Legacy” came from the same band that made “Wrathchild,” and it’s all the better for it. A flurry of warped ideas and skewed melodies, it’s Maiden at their most gleefully obtuse. (DL)

EMI

85. "Bring Your Daughter... to the Slaughter" - 'No Prayer for the Dying' (1990)

Originally written by Bruce Dickinson as a solo cut for the ‘Nightmare On Elm Street 5: The Dream Child’ soundtrack, “Bring Your Daughter” was hijacked by Maiden and, somewhat bizarrely, became the band’s only #1 single in the UK. It’s ridiculous, obviously, but you love it anyway. (DL)

EMI

84. "Heaven Can Wait" - 'Somewhere in Time' (1986)

Blessed with one of the most irresistible (and wordless) sing-along moments in the Maiden canon, “Heaven Can Wait” from ‘Somewhere In Time’ was a custom-built show-stopper. Thirty years on, it still goes down a storm when the band play it live. (DL)

EMI

83. "The Alchemist" - 'The Final Frontier' (2010)

Despite sharing its name with a (slightly superior) song from Bruce Dickinson’s ‘Chemical Wedding’ album, this succinct, melodic juggernaut has plenty of rampaging charm. It was, however, comprehensively dwarfed by the more epic tunes on ‘The Final Frontier.’ (DL)

EMI

82. "Dream of Mirrors" - 'Brave New World' (2000)

“Dream of Mirrors” is one of the couple tracks said to have been written before Maiden swapped Blaze Bayley for the returning Bruce Dickinson. With gentle guitar textures more commonly heard from Murray, this Gers/Harris ‘Brave New World’ cut initially plods on without much heft but as the pace intensifies, the vision comes together and stands as one of the more unique tracks in the Iron Maiden catalog, especially with the second half’s galloping force and double-time chorus to give it a defining punch. (JD)

EMI

81. "To Tame a Land" - 'Piece of Mind' (1983)

With a tattered copy of Frank Herbert’s ‘Dune’ sticking out of his back pocket, Steve Harris summoned this rambling epic from the mid-‘80s, delighting metal fans and sci-fi nerds in equal measure. One of Maiden’s great, lost masterworks. (DL)

EMI

80. "Total Eclipse" - 'The Number of the Beast' (1982)

Inexplicably dumped on the b-side of “Run To The Hills,” rather than replacing “Gangland” on ‘The Number Of The Beast,’ “Total Eclipse” is easily Maiden’s most revered b-side and yet another showcase for the much-missed Clive Burr. (DL)

Parlaphone

79. "Speed of Light" - 'The Book of Souls (2015)

The world’s first taste of ‘The Book Of Souls’ gave little indication of the progressive splendour to come, but “Speed Of Light” hit the nail on the head well enough. A balls-out metal anthem with endearingly daft lyrics about lonesome galaxies, event horizons and “shootin’ plasma”. Eww. (DL)

EMI

78. "Run Silent Run Deep" - 'No Prayer for the Dying' (1990)

Very few of the songs on ‘No Prayer For The Dying’ exhibited the fire or flair that had brought Maiden to prominence, but this one at least tried to generate some drama and dynamics. A decent chorus, some cool lead breaks and a hint of spooky ambience save the day. (DL)

Parlaphone

77. "The Great Unknown" - 'The Book of Souls (2015)

An unexpected crowd favourite on Maiden’s ‘Book Of Souls’ tour, this Harris/Smith co-write is one of its parent album’s more straightforward moments, but its underlying theme of mankind’s hapless spiral towards destruction is undeniably potent. (DL)

EMI

76. "Fear Is the Key" - 'Fear of the Dark' (1992)

By 1992, it was obvious that Maiden were pulling in different directions, but ‘Fear Of The Dark’ had many great moments, this Dickinson/Gers co-write included. Almost Zep-like in its stomping flow, “Fear Is The Key” belongs in the grand pantheon of Maiden songs that don’t really sound like Maiden songs. (DL)

EMI

75. "Can I Play With Madness" - 'Seventh Son of a Seventh Son' (1988)

A monster hit in the U.K. when it emerged as the first single from ‘Seventh Son Of A Seventh Son’ in early 1988, “Can I Play With Madness” remains one of Maiden’s best known songs, and it’s not surprising given the size of that chorus. Full marks, as ever, for the mid-song tempo change, too. (DL)

EMI

74. "Starblind" - 'The Final Frontier' (2010)

Iron Maiden’s three strongest songwriters (Harris, Dickinson, Smith) partnered up on “Starblind,” a heady progressive track from ‘The Final Frontier’ centered around off-kilter riffing and a scathing attitude toward religion. “Virgins in the teeth of God are meat and drink to feed the damned / You may pass through me and I will feel the life that you live less,” is just a small sampling of the vitriol spilled from the pulpit of the fiery Dickinson. Verbose, but somehow still catchy, “Starblind” is just as musically complex and even breaks into a bit of a Rush-like jam-section! (JD)

EMI

73. "Brave New World" - 'Brave New World' (2000)

Maiden had no shortage of epic, instantly memorable material when they made ‘Brave New World.’ The title track doesn’t quite match the instant shot-in-the-arm of “The Wicker Man” or the prog splurge of “Ghost Of The Navigator,” but its insistent refrain and robust mid-tempo momentum made it an easy win on the band’s subsequent world tour. (DL)

EMI

72. "The Prophecy" - 'Seventh Son of a Seventh Son' (1988)

A rare writing credit for Dave Murray is always welcome and “The Prophecy” duly provided ‘Seventh Son Of A Seventh Son’ with one of its most elegant and eccentric moments. A potted prog metal fantasia, brought to a sublime conclusion by Murray’s serene, acoustic outro, it’s an enchanting but hellbound tale of infernal premonitions. (DL)

EMI

71. "Innocent Exile" - 'Killers' (1981)

The master of finger-wrenching bass intros, Steve Harris has never sounded more electrified than he does as “Innocent Exile” bursts to life. A song honed during Maiden’s remorseless early days on the London pub circuit, “Innocent Exile” exemplified the originality of Harris’ fledgling songwriting, not to mention the sheer ferocity of the ‘Killers’-era line-up. (DL)

EMI

70. "Out of the Silent Planet" - 'Brave New World' (2000)

One of the less adventurous moments on ‘Brave New World,’ “Out Of The Silent Planet” seemed most like a reminder of what the band used to do, with a dash of added post-millennial flair thrown in for good measure. It’s a high energy rumbler with plenty of sharp edges, but the eventual melodic payoff is a little half-baked. (DL)

EMI

69. "Prodigal Son" - 'Killers' (1981)

“The devil’s got my soul and he won’t leave me be...” howls Paul Di’Anno on this oft-forgotten prog-tinged tour-de-force from Maiden’s classic second album. Both one of the former frontman’s finest performances and an early example of Steve Harris’ love of shimmering prog vibes, it’s one for the real diehards. (DL)

EMI

68. "Lord of Light" - 'A Matter of Life and Death' (2006)

The deepest of cuts from ‘A Matter Of Life And Death’ is a fine example of what happens when Smith, Harris and Dickinson join forces. Dark spectral forces lurk amid the churning, dissonant riffs, while Bruce’s voice soars and swoops, urging us “down into the fiery underworld below”. Not exactly a party banger, but stunning nonetheless. (DL)

EMI

67. "Blood Brothers" - 'Brave New World' (2000)

Guaranteed to make grown men weep when Maiden play it live, “Blood Brothers” is a straightforward and laudably heartfelt Steve Harris special. Sometimes, the simplest emotions require a simple soundtrack, and while this song’s waltz-like, prosaic approach definitely edges towards schmaltz, its creators’ sincerity ensures that it hits the target. (DL)

EMI

66. "Gangland" - 'The Number of the Beast' (1982)

If granted a mulligan, Maiden would have presented ‘The Number of the Beast’ a bit differently. It was between the rambunctious and fang-toothed “Gangland” or the doomier “Total Eclipse” for the B-side of the “Run to the Hills” single, meaning the selection would not make the album cut. Ultimately, the latter was resigned to somewhat obscurity until it was reunited with ‘TNOTB’ on a subsequent reissue. We’ll disagree with the band’s decision here as “Gangland” finds Maiden stomping on the accelerator for a blazing track with an over-caffeinated

performance from Burr and some of Dickinson’s most piercing shrieks. (JD)

EMI

65. "Isle of Avalon" - 'The Final Frontier' (2010)

Adrian Smith’s 21stcentury Maiden songs have been consistently enthralling, and while “Isle Of Avalon” was perhaps too opaque and left-field to stand out on ‘The Final Frontier,’ it deserves to be reconsidered as a major highlight of the band’s recent output. Wildly cinematic and ever-so-slightly lysergic in tone, it’s an unsung gem. (DL)

EMI

64. "The Thin Line Between Love and Hate" - 'Brave New World' (2000)

The final track from Maiden’s comeback album, ‘Brave New World,’ “The Thin Line Between Love and Hate” shows Dickinson exploring his full range, both technically and emotionally. “Thin Line” drives the point home — Maiden had returned from the dark ages and were ready to once again be a creative force in metal. (GH)

EMI

63. "The Clairvoyant" - 'Seventh Son of a Seventh Son' (1988)

The third single from ‘Seventh Son Of A Seventh Son’ and the weirdest of the three by some distance, “The Clairvoyant” is a mini-prog metal symphony, replete with fluid tempo changes, a pomp-packed chorus and some of Murray and Smith’s finest ever lead work. Steve Harris’ bass intro is pretty damn iconic, too. (DL)

EMI

62. "Another Life" - 'Killers' (1981)

Kicked off by a classic burst of Clive Burr whipping around his kit, “Another Life” holds its own on ‘Killers,’ an album full of Maiden classics. While much of the then flourishing New Wave Of British Heavy Metal was, in essence, traditional hard rock with a bit of extra venom, Maiden were redefining metal on idiosyncratic cuts like this. (DL)

EMI

61. "Sign of the Cross" - 'The X Factor' (1995)

With hindsight, ‘The X-Factor’ was a much better record than most fans gave it credit for. “Sign Of The Cross” is a masterful opener: richly atmospheric and structurally ambitious, it gave Blaze Bayley the perfect

platform to announce his arrival, while dragging Maiden into the darkest sonic shadows of their career to date. (DL)

EMI

60. "Coming Home" - 'The Final Frontier' (2010)

With many of Bruce Dickinson’s best songs inspired by flight, the singer took his most direct approach to date with “Coming Home.” Written directly about flying a jet from inside the cockpit, “Coming Home” relishes in the joy of landing at your final destination after a long time away. Like many Dickinson-penned tracks, “Coming Home” is all about that chorus, so strap in and enjoy. (GH)

EMI

59. "Sea of Madness" - 'Somewhere in Time' (1986)

The propulsive power of four-string phenom Steve Harris never sounded so dominant! While Harris’ bass has been at the forefront of countless Maiden classics, it asserts itself the most on “Sea of Madness,” its clanking thunder giving the ‘Somewhere in Time’ track more of a metal foothold than the rest of the album, as the synthesized guitars kept the group in vogue with the changing musical tides. A bit overlooked in the catalog, “Sea of Madness” sports one of Maiden’s most resplendent series of vocal melodies. (JD)

EMI

58. "Die With Your Boots On" - 'Piece of Mind' (1983)

A crowd-pleaser from ‘Piece Of Mind,’ “Die With Your Boots On” skilfully exploited Maiden’s earthy charms, placing them in the midst of the battlefield, surrounded by bruised and bloody comrades. Okay, Maiden shows aren’t that brutal, but the parallels are obvious and the song’s rapid-fire chorus could easily take your head off from close range. (DL)

EMI

57. "Genghis Khan" - 'Killers' (1981)

Named after one of history’s most ruthless warlords, the tyrant ruler of the steppe, Genghis Khan, this track is the highest-ranking standalone instrumental on our list. “Genghis Khan” is a testament to the talents of original drummer Clive Burr, who helped unify Maiden’s early sound with his frantic attack. What he lacked in surgical precision, he made up for with attitude and a blur of his arms, doing his best to suggest the sound of thousands of thundering hooves galloping across the dusty plains of the Mongol empire just before the one-minute mark, the highlight not only of the song, but Burr’s brief but legendary Maiden career — R.I.P. (JD)

EMI

56. "Flash of the Blade" - 'Powerslave' (1984)

There is nowhere near enough swashbuckling in heavy metal these days, perhaps because Iron Maiden absolutely nailed the idea on ‘Powerslave’ in 1984. A cult favourite among fans of certain age, “Flash Of The Blade” is a foot-to-the-floor tale of shiny weapons and swivel-eyed bravado that really should have been a single. (DL)

EMI

55. "Judas Be My Guide" - 'Fear of the Dark' (1992)

Perhaps one of the most underrated Maiden tracks of all time, “Judas Be My Guide” is one of the high points of ‘Fear of the Dark.’ The Dickinson / Murray cut leads with one of the band’s greatest all-time riffs, setting a brilliant atmosphere for a truly gigantic chorus. (GH)

EMI

54. "Still Life" - 'Piece of Mind' (1983)

Ignoring Nicko McBrain’s daft backwards message at the start, “Still Life” is one of the darkest and most affecting songs on ‘Piece Of Mind.’ Inspired by Ramsay Campbell’s 1964 tale ‘The Inhabitant Of The Lake,’ it’s another horror-fuelled slice of melodrama, topped with one of Bruce Dickinson’s most eye-watering vocal performances. (DL)

EMI

53. "Only the Good Die Young" - 'Seventh Son of a Seventh Son' (1988)

Bringing Maiden’s 1988 masterpiece ‘Seventh Son Of A Seventh Son’ to a close with an inch-perfect wallop to the forehead, “Only The Good Die Young” is pure melodic metal perfection, underpinned by that unmistakable gallop and as satisfying a conclusion to the album’s epic excursion as anyone could hope for. (DL)

Parlaphone

52. "The Red and the Black" - 'The Book of Souls (2015)

This 13-minute monument to classic Maiden would have been the central epic on ‘The Book Of Souls,’ were it not for the mind-bending “Empire Of The Clouds,” but this Harris-penned colossus more than earns its place. Both a celebration of the band’s trademark sound, and a bold journey toward its outer limits, it’s one of the great Maiden songs of the modern era. (DL)

EMI

51. "The Longest Day" - 'A Matter of Life and Death' (2006)

Showcasing a newly dense, dark and absorbing approach to their beloved war stories, “The Longest Day” is the fearless, beating heart of “A Matter Of Life And Death”: a sprawl of grim poetry across some of the heaviest and most stirring riffs and melodies that Steve Harris has ever conjured, it’s a classic dark horse deep cut. (DL)

EMI

50. "When the Wild Wind Blows" - 'The Final Frontier' (2010)

Iron Maiden sure love finishing off albums with an epic tale, don’t they? At 11 minutes in length, “Wild Wind” tells the story of two lovers facing the world’s end, finally committing suicide in their bunker after mistaking an earthquake for the fallout. Bruce Dickinson has claimed many times that Iron Maiden don’t write love songs, but he admitted to Loudwire in a 2017 interview that “Wild Wind” certainly could be considered one. (GH)

EMI

49. "Brighter Than a Thousand Suns" - 'A Matter of Life and Death' (2006)

There’s no shortage of war-condemning epics within Iron Maiden’s body of work. In 2006, they dedicated an entire record, ‘A Matter of Life and Death,’ to further explore the concepts of human conflict and religion. The invention of the atomic bomb forever altered the game of war, enabling humans to assume the power of a god with world-annihilating capabilities; that was the subject of “Brighter Than a Thousand Suns.”

The song is built entirely on the tension of the ascending/descending guitar passages and Dickinson’s combustible operatic take and winding structure. (JD)

EMI

48. "Stranger in a Strange Land" - 'Somewhere in Time' (1986)

‘Somewhere In Time’ may well be the most underrated Maiden album, which seems insane given the extraordinary songs on it, including “Stranger In A Strange Land.” One of three Adrian Smith tunes on the album, this dark and unnerving tale of physical and spiritual disconnection took Maiden into new territory. It also enabled Eddie to become a cyborg cowboy. Fun times. (DL)

EMI

47. "Ghost of the Navigator" - 'Brave New World' (2000)

The second track on ‘Brave New World,’ “Ghost of the Navigator,” makes good on the promise of the promotional single and leadoff track, ‘The Wicker Man.’ With Adrian Smith rejoining the band, but his replacement Jannick Gers remaining with them as well, fans revelled in the idea of a three guitar attack which added an extra layer of harmony. (JD)

Parlaphone

46. "Empire of the Clouds" - 'The Book of Souls' (2015)

The 18-minute “Empire Of The Clouds” is the most ambitious song of Iron Maiden’s entire career… and it’s on their most recent album. The closing ‘Book of Souls’ track deals with Dickinson’s lifelong love affair with aircraft and the real-life R101 airship crash of 1930. Bruce didn’t only sing on the song either — he composed the piano lines, which so beautifully initiate and conclude the piece. “Empire of the Clouds” was the final track recorded for ’The Book of Souls,’ which means Bruce Dickinson’s tongue cancer was at its most developed before the singer sought medical attention. You should know by this point that nothing can stop Bruce, including cancer, and “Empire” is definitive proof. (GH)

EMI

45. "Twilight Zone" - 'Killers' (1981)

“Twilight Zone” always felt like a casual continuation of the themes explored in “Purgatory,” but with an excitable, souped-up ‘70s rock vibe instead of archetypal Maiden bluster. (DL)

EMI

44. "Purgatory" - 'Killers' (1981)

An early example of Steve Harris’ ongoing tussle with existential torment, Purgatory is a top-notch early Maiden shit-kicker that deigned

to match the absurd energy levels of the band’s live shows and very nearly got away with it. It was released as a single in 1981, adorned with one of Maiden’s coolest ever covers. (DL)

EMI

43. "The Clansman" - 'Virtual XI' (1998)

As much as many fans prefer to gloss over the Blaze Bayley era, it did produce a handful of flat-out classics, and “The Clansman” is a strong contender for topping that list. An unapologetic post-‘Braveheart’ paean to William Wallace and the unwavering spirit of the underdog, its bellicose, cinematic sweep drew a glorious vocal from Bayley. (DL)

EMI

42. "Rainmaker" - 'Dance of Death' (2003)

Old school Maiden fans who have been a little less receptive to the reunion-era material often have a common complaint: the more recent albums tend to have less concise, punchy, singles-oriented songs. The Brits essentially doubled down on their progressive side in the 21st century, but still demonstrated a knack for their more standard style of writing with the ‘Dance of Death’ single, “Rainmaker.” This wouldn’t feel out of place on ‘Piece of Mind.’ Here, Maiden barrage the listener with a series of hooks, guitar or vocal-oriented, and for many, it’s the last truly great song the band released in the more traditional single format. (JD)

EMI

41. "Caught Somewhere in Time" - 'Somewhere in Time' (1986)

Having conquered the globe on the World Slavery Tour, Iron Maiden’s sixth studio album was destined to be a big deal. Often overlooked, its opening track was a monstrous statement of renewed intent, fizzing with futuristic zeal and blessed with a chorus of joyous enormity. One for the next nostalgia tour, eh lads? (DL)

Parlaphone

40. "The Book of Souls" - 'The Book of Souls' (2015)

The Harris/Gers writing tandem has been one of the most fruitful writing combinations within the Maiden camp since the guitarist replaced Adrian Smith in 1990. Gers’ more forceful, rigid style offers some depth to Maiden’s typically fluid sound and here he invokes shades of “Mother Russia” and “Powerslave” on the towering title track to ‘The Book of Souls.’ It foregoes the drawn-out opening buildup, setting the mood but exploding with triumphant power before too much time passes. The arrangement playfully volleys between plodding tempos and a fireworks display of melody as Dickinson describes a Mayan civilization lost in the annals of time with lucid detail. (JD)

EMI

39. "Charlotte the Harlot" - 'Iron Maiden' (1980)

Iron Maiden never really fell victim to the lyrical tropes of fast cars and faster women, eschewing themes of piston-pumping fury and sexual conquests in favor of history and literature. "Charlotte the Harlot," despite telling the tale of a sleazy gutter queen, takes a dismissive attitude toward the world's oldest profession as Maiden played their own lyrical game early. (JD)

EMI

38. "Sun and Steel" - 'Piece of Mind' (1983)

As an avid fencer, Bruce Dickinson’s fascination with battle takes many forms. In the case of “Sun and Steel” from Iron Maiden’s ‘Piece of Mind’ album, Dickinson had legendary Japanese swordsman Miyamoto Musashi in mind, along with the warrior’s ‘Book of Five Rings.’ Bruce even references four of the five chapters with the line, “Through earth and fire, water and wind.” Though ‘Piece of Mind’ tracks like “The Trooper” and “Flight of Icarus” often overshadow the album’s other tracks, “Sun and Steel” is fantastic and extremely interesting for history buffs. (GH)

EMI

37. "Be Quick or Be Dead" - 'Fear of the Dark' (1992)

After the muted response they received for ‘No Prayer For The Dying,’ Maiden needed to come roaring out of the blocks for their next album. A pre-‘Fear Of The Dark’ single, “Be Quick Or Be Dead” did the job admirably, delivering plenty of high octane Maiden clatter and a Dickinson lyric that dripped with contempt for dishonest politicians everywhere. (DL)

EMI

36. "Transylvania" - 'Iron Maiden' (1980)

Maiden’s instrumentals are sometimes easy to overlook, such is the charismatic allure of Bruce Dickinson’s presence on the band’s records. But in the pre-Bruce days, Transylvania stood out as one of the band’s most potent crowd-pleasers, a neat nailing of the early Maiden sound with just enough vampyric menace to justify the title. (DL)

EMI

35. "Back in the Village" - 'Powerslave' (1984)

A second trip to Patrick “The Prisoner” McGoohan’s Portmeirion prison, “Back In The Village” is an underrated Smith/Dickinson rager, delivered at maximum velocity and with a towering vocal performance from Bruce, as he bellows about foxes, chickens and tables being overturned. We still don’t know what “switch the dial and eat the worm” means, mind you. (DL)

EMI

34. "Wasted Years" - 'Somewhere in Time' (1986)

Adrian Smith wasn’t sure whether “Wasted Years” would make the cut for Maiden’s sixth album, ‘Somewhere In Time.’ He needn’t have worried. As soon as Steve Harris heard the song’s inspired arrangement and explosive chorus, it was in. One of the band’s greatest ever sing-alongs, this proved that Maiden could out-melody the best of them. (DL)

EMI

33. "Flight of Icarus" - 'Piece of Mind' (1983)

The news that Maiden had put “Icarus” back in their live show for 2018 was greeted with deafening euphoria from most sane Maiden fans. For decades, the song remained absent from set lists as Harris notoriously detested the tempo of the studio version. It's a slow-burning single that has always been a little overshadowed by “The Trooper,” it’s a masterful exercise in turbocharged storytelling. The definitive version is on ‘Live After Death,’ incidentally. (DL)

EMI

32. "Drifter" - 'Killers' (1981)

A regular set closer in the pre-Bruce days, “Drifter” often evolved into a rambling jam with added crowd participation, with Paul Di’Anno often slipping into a Sting impersonation (“Yoooo yo yo yo yo!” etc). Onstage antics aside, “Drifter” is an archetypal early Maiden adrenaline surge, all clattering rhythms and spiky twin leads. (DL)

EMI

31. "Run to the Hills" - 'The Number of the Beast' (1982)

Iron Maiden isn’t thought of as a particularly socially conscious band, but the lyrics to “Run To The Hills” could have been written by Tom Morello (and you could almost imagine Joe Strummer singing some of them with the Clash). Penned by Steve Harris, the lyrics take the perspective of both Native Americans, and the Europeans who lied and cheated, “raping the women and wasting the men” in order to conquer their land. Beyond the lyrics, this song served as the band’s first single with Bruce Dickinson, and while it couldn’t be referred to as “commercial,” it was at least more accessible than anything on Maiden’s first two albums. If you’re trying to understand how Iron Maiden went from an underground New Wave Of British Heavy Metal band to one of the most popular rock groups in the world, you can start your investigation here. (BI)

EMI

30. "Running Free" - 'Iron Maiden' (1980)

Original singer Paul Di’Anno, in retrospect, seemed a bit too punk for Maiden. That’s definitely true on this song, which he co-wrote with Steve Harris. Most of Maiden’s songs took you to another world (no pun

intended): a horror film, a sci-fi film, a war film. “Running Free,” however, was a rare angst-ridden anthem for the band’s teenage fans: “Just sixteen/A pickup truck/Out of money/Out of luck/Got nowhere to call my own/Hit the gas and here I go, I’m running free!” Bruce Dickinson has sung this hundreds of times in concert, and does a good job at honoring the original, but no one sings these lyrics as convincingly as Di’Anno did. (BI)

EMI

29. "Moonchild" - 'Seventh Son of a Seventh Son' (1988)

“Seven deadly sins, seven ways to win…” Most metalheads know that eerie prologue and, equally, most metalheads know what it feels like when Maiden burst into “Moonchild” during a live show. A full-pelt prog metal neck-wrecker, “Moonchild” rules. (DL)

EMI

28. "Where Eagles Dare" - 'Piece of Mind' (1983)

Maiden fans were distraught when Clive Burr flew the nest, but the band replaced him with Nicko McBrain and all discontent swiftly evaporated when his thunderous drum intro erupted through the world’s speakers at the beginning of the song, the opening track on ‘Piece of Mind.’ A typically bombastic Maiden tale of military derring-do, “Where Eagles Dare” still wrenches breath from lungs. (DL)

EMI

27. "The Evil That Men Do" - 'Seventh Son of a Seventh Son' (1988)

Despite being an album full of proggy conceits, “Seventh Son” also boasts several of Maiden’s snappiest, sharpest anthems. “The Evil That Men Do” is one of their best: from its shimmering, melodic set-up to the full-throttle gallop that hurls the song towards its rabble-rousing conclusion, it’s a precise, white-knuckle showcase for the magical three-way songwriting partnership between Dickinson, Harris and Smith. (DL)

EMI

26. "22 Acacia Avenue" - 'The Number of the Beast' (1982)

When Adrian Smith joined the Maiden ranks in 1981, the band didn’t just get an expressive axeman to complement the unrivaled sheen of Dave Murray; they also got one of the band’s strongest songwriters. This didn’t present itself until ‘The Number of the Beast,’ when Smith and Harris reworked a song from the guitarist’s old band Urchin. “22 Acacia Avenue” continues the story of “Charlotte the Harlot” with razor-edged leads, panting pauses and climactic surges of energy. (JD)

EMI

25. "Strange World" - 'Iron Maiden' (1980)

While the galloping might and aching twin leads of UFO’s “Doctor, Doctor” are more indicative of typical Maiden, Michael Schenker’s mystical influence takes its hold on Steve Harris on “Strange World.” This surreal, dream-like ballad is tinged with the lightest touch of psychedelia and the usually gruff Di’Anno offers a more innocent look with a raw, yearning vocal performance as Maiden delivered one last dose of ‘70s rock before their historic rise to heavy metal greatness. (JD)

EMI

24. "Infinite Dreams" - 'Seventh Son of a Seventh Son' (1988)

A perfect moment on a perfect album, “Infinite Dreams” is the most cerebral flight of fancy on ‘Seventh Son.’ Its ruminations on life, death and eternity bring depth and a dash of disquiet to Maiden’s late ‘80s tour-de-force. Musically ingenious, with shades of prog and blues, and full of melodic sleight-of-hand, it peaks with one of Adrian Smith and Dave Murray’s greatest ever duels (at 4:40, solo fans!). What a song. (DL)

EMI

23. "Revelations" - 'Piece of Mind' (1983)

A Bruce Dickinson special, and one that led him to play guitar onstage with Maiden for the first time, “Revelations” provided ‘Piece Of Mind’ with one of its most dramatic and distinctive moments. Bruce’s prog influences can be heard seeping through the grandiloquent melee, but it’s his vocal performance that seals the deal. (DL)

EMI

22. "The Prisoner" - 'The Number of the Beast' (1982)

“I am not a number, I am a free man!” After Maiden fans were introduced to the full potential of Bruce Dickinson’s voice on “Children of the Damned,” the singer hit them again with “The Prisoner,” tackling a dystopian narrative from the British television show of the same name. From the intro sample, to the beginning drum and guitar lines, to its massive chorus, “Children of the Damned” is pure NWOBHM bliss for Maiden fanatics. (GH)

EMI

21. "The Talisman" - 'The Final Frontier' (2010)

Janick Gers takes a lot of criticism from fans, but one look at his writing credits should shut the haters up. “The Talisman,” co-written with Steve Harris, is the band’s finest ode to the treachery of the high seas since “Rime of the Ancient Mariner.” Lush, triumphant melodies splash the hull of this galloping ‘The Final Frontier’ saga after a chilling prolonged but necessary acoustic introduction as Dickinson puts the listener on the deck in the midst of the raging storm. You can nearly taste the seasalt on your lips by the time this one’s done. Check out the live version on ‘En Vivo!’ too — it’s even better with Adrian Smith’s vibrant guitar fills. (JD)

EMI

20. "The Wicker Man" - 'Brave New World' (2000)

No one was surprised that Iron Maiden’s 1999 reunion tour with Bruce Dickinson and Adrian Smith was a huge success. But could Maiden produce another great album with Bruce and Adrian back in the band? The first single released from the reunion album, 2000’s ‘Brave New World’ -- “The Wicker Man” -- definitively answered that question: hell yeah. In the new millenium, Maiden’s albums have all been treated with respect; they’ve never embarrassed themselves or their fans. They’ve also become more popular on a global scale than ever before (and more popular globally than nearly any other band in the world; if you don’t believe that, watch the ‘Flight 666’ documentary). “The Wicker Man” is what kicked off the band’s triumphant comeback. With “The Wicker Man,” Iron Maiden established that they weren’t just a nostalgia act. (BI)

EMI

19. "Prowler" - 'Iron Maiden' (1980)

The song that grabbed the attention of the UK rock press and, as a result, thrust Maiden into the spotlight, “Prowler” both defined and outstripped the entire NWOBHM movement in one attempt. It’s hard to imagine Maiden writing a song about a pervert lurking in the bushes and masturbating as women walk past today, but the early ‘80s were a simpler time. (DL)

EMI

18. "Paschendale" - 'Dance of Death' (2003)

War stories have long formed an important part of Maiden’s armoury, but “Paschendale” stands out: It is, by far, the most emotionally powerful. Adrian Smith’s intricate and immersive epic lent itself brilliantly to an overblown stage production, but behind the bluster there is a heart-rending tale of heroism and folly contained within this sprawling, deceptively brutal mini-symphony. (DL)

EMI

17. "Aces High" - 'Powerslave' (1984)

Best experienced live, with Winston Churchill’s immortal speech as its intro, “Aces High” is one of the finest examples of Iron Maiden in flat-out, last-one-to-the-end-is-a-loser mode. A sustained rush of adrenalin that perfectly evokes the terrifying intensity of an aerial dogfight, it’s a definitive Maiden moment, one of their strongest ever singles and, significantly, a song that summed up Bruce Dickinson’s twin obsessions of history and aviation across four ridiculously exciting minutes. (DL)

EMI

16. "Fear of the Dark" - 'Fear of the Dark' (1992)

Playing on a universal anxiety, Iron Maiden’s 1992 epic stands as one of the band’s most enduring tracks. Only a handful of others have been even more frequent constants in the set list; it’s difficult to imagine a Maiden gig without the bellowing voices of a packed arena chanting along to the opening melody. With its sing-song passages, theatrical guitar explosions, picturesque lyrics and Dickinson’s nervous pace, “Fear of the Dark” is quintessential Iron Maiden. (JD)

EMI

15. "2 Minutes to Midnight" - 'Powerslave' (1984)

A blistering example of what happens when Adrian Smith and Bruce Dickinson write songs together, “2 Minutes To Midnight” is densely packed with the frontman’s gruesome lyrics and driven breathlessly along by a riff that is so brilliantly, effortlessly classic that it has often been ripped off (but never matched). Metal songs about the looming apocalypse are ten-a-penny, of course, but this was one of Maiden’s biggest hits for a reason: that chorus... it’s fucking huge. (DL)

EMI

14. "Murders in the Rue Morgue" - 'Killers' (1981)

Maiden have covered themselves in plenty of glory in recent times, but it’s hard to deny that there is something uniquely exhilarating about a band’s earliest records, when hunger and desire are still a bigger deal than dollars and demographics. Punched out with bug-eyed ferocity, not least by Paul Di’Anno, “Murders In The Rue Morgue” comes closer to exhibiting genuine punk rock spirit than any other Maiden song: it’s fast, it’s furious and, best of all, it may be the only notable metal song in history to feature the word “gendarmes.” (DL)

Parlaphone

13. "If Eternity Should Fail" - 'The Book of Souls' (2015)

This was the opener to the band’s most recent release -- and their first double album -- 2015’s ‘The Book Of Souls.’ The Bruce Dickinson-penned song announces that the album is going deep into prog territory with its ethereal synth line… before it kicks into a galloping classic Maiden rhythm. All of Maiden’s albums in the second Bruce era have been respectable, but few expected that the band would unleash a classic in 2015, thirty-five years after their debut. “If Eternity Should Fail” announced that ‘The Book Of Souls’ would be worth paying close attention to. The following ten songs made good on that promise. (BI)

EMI

12. "Remember Tomorrow" - 'Iron Maiden' (1980)

The original lineup -- bassist Steve Harris, guitarist Dave Murray, singer Paul Di’Anno, drummer Clive Burr and guitarist Dennis Stratton -- emerged fully formed on their self-titled debut, with a mastery of dynamics worthy of Black Sabbath. Indeed, “Remember Tomorrow” is Maiden at their most Sabbath-y. The song included laid-back moments where you could quietly contemplate life, but during other parts of the song, you couldn’t help but to headbang. The lyrics were mysterious, but who didn’t love singing along: “I shall return… from out of the fiiiiiiiiiiire!” Years later, Metallica would cover “Remember Tomorrow,” and would almost match the intensity of the original. (BI)

EMI

11. "The Ides of March" / "Wrathchild" - 'Killers' (1981)

If the first Iron Maiden album sealed the band’s reputation as contenders, the second one really made the competition – such as it was – sweat. It certainly helped that ‘Killers’ began with the irresistible one-two of imperious intro “The Ides Of March” and the short, sharp elbow to the nose of “Wrathchild.” Even as Maiden dove into deep prog territory in the early 21st century, Wrathchild remained a live show staple and it’s not hard to work out why. It’s a ferocious rock and roll song delivered with maximum Maiden muscle. Perfection. (DL)

EMI

10. "Iron Maiden" - 'Iron Maiden' (1980)

All the best bands have their own theme song (see also Manowar, Helloween, Iced Earth) but no one has ever conjured a titular rallying cry that comes close to Maiden’s perennial set closer. “Iron Maiden” is a pretty simple song with an even simpler message, but it’s one that seemed to magically capture the spirit of the band’s explosive early days. Nearly forty years later, it still makes discerning metalheads want to drive a car through a wall. (DL)

EMI

9. "Seventh Son of a Seventh Son" - 'Seventh Son of a Seventh Son' (1988)

The centerpiece and title track of Iron Maiden’s ambitious seventh album, “Seventh Son of a Seventh Son” is the “Phantom of the Opera” of Bruce’s first era. Divided into two distinct halves, the opening moments work the epic angle with bombastic choirs and bold, striding riffs upon

which Dickinson narrates the loose concept album’s theme (six brothers await the birth of the seventh) with the lung capacity of an Olympic swimmer. He takes a break during the back half as the nervous tension gives way to a melodic explosion of articulate solos primarily at the hands (and fingers) of Adrian Smith. (JD)

EMI

8. "The Trooper" - 'Piece of Mind' (1983)

An immaculate, jolting dose of heavy metal perfection, “The Trooper” is also a pretty weird song. Firstly, the word “trooper” is never mentioned. Secondly, it doesn’t really have a chorus... unless you count “Oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh!” And yet, thanks in part to Steve Harris’ songwriting prowess and also to the several metric fucktons of extra “oomph” that Nicko McBrain brought to the band for ‘Piece Of Mind,’ “The Trooper” is a timeless, indisputable and reliably unifying classic. Years later, it would provide the name for the band’s own brand of beer. Up the irons! (DL)

EMI

7. "Children of the Damned" - 'The Number of the Beast' (1982)

Metal’s relationship with horror hardly needs explaining here, but Iron Maiden’s contribution to that enduring bond is routinely underestimated. “Children Of The Damned” was another example of Steve Harris filtering his subcultural passions through Maiden’s lyrics: on this occasion, ‘60s horror flicks ‘Village Of The Damned’ and ‘Children Of The Damned.’ But it’s the music that makes “Children” such a devastating plunge into the

shadows. At first, it burns slowly, with palpable menace. Then it erupts, and all hell breaks loose. (DL)

EMI

6. "Powerslave" - 'Powerslave' (1984)

Written by Bruce Dickinson, the title track of the album that propelled Iron Maiden into superstar territory is one of the band’s most wildly atmospheric efforts. Beautifully evoking the ancient Egyptian grandeur of the album’s artwork, the song’s lumbering but urgent gait and near-psychedelic mid-section have long made it one of the band’s most powerful live songs. Dave Murray fans will be well aware that this song contains one of his finest ever solos, while it’s hard to think of a more intense or convincing Dickinson performance from this era. Crank it up. We’re all slaves to the power of death. (DL)

EMI

5. "Phantom of the Opera" - 'Iron Maiden' (1980)

“Phantom Of The Opera” was arguably the first bona fide epic that Steve Harris attempted. He could hardly have done a better job of it: from that spine-tingling opening riff to the irresistible, heads-down clatter of the verses and on, with almost outrageous opulence, to that stately but menacing middle eight (“Keep your distance, walk away…”), Phantom is both a ripping metal anthem and an ingenious prog rock monolith. (DL)

EMI

4. "Killers" - 'Killers' (1981)

There is no doubt that Paul Di’Anno would have struggled with Maiden’s post-Killers material, but on the band’s second title track the gruff Londoner excelled himself, delivering a performance that perfectly matched the edgy fury of the song’s thunderous backdrop. Co-written by the singer and Steve Harris, it’s an early example of the Maiden gallop, albeit delivered at breakneck pace, and a thrilling snapshot of the Di’Anno era as it reached its euphoric apex. Plus, of course, “You walk through the subway, his eyes burn a hole in your back!” is one of the great opening lines in metal history. (DL)

EMI

3. "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" - 'Powerslave' (1984)

The finale of Iron Maiden’s ‘Powerslave' album was the iconic band’s longest epic until they unleashed “Empire of the Clouds” in 2015. Based on the 18th century poem, “Rime of the Ancient Mariner” is Iron Maiden at their very best when it comes to storytelling. As master of ceremonies, Bruce Dickinson takes listeners sea-bound for nearly 14 minutes, as Steve Harris’ somber bass work ties together the first and third movement while sounds of the ocean and a creaking ship adds ambiance. Add two full minutes of mean guitar solos roaring through the ninth and tenth minute, and you’ve got a Maiden classic for the ages. (GH)

EMI

2. "The Number of the Beast" - 'The Number of the Beast' (1982)

Inspired by dark dreams of moonlit Satanic rituals (Steve Harris had just watched ‘Damien: Omen II’ when he wrote it), “The Number Of The Beast” was never a hymn to the omnipotent goatlord, despite what some frothing religious nuts seemed to believe. Instead, it was one of the riotous and supremely confident metal anthems the world had ever heard. From its subtly off-kilter intro and that slow build towards the song’s full, fiery kick-off, “The Number of the Beast” is the sound of a band hitting their stride and evolving into something truly unique. From Dickinson’s screams to the late, great Clive Burr’s lissom pummel, it’s simply a heavy metal benchmark. (DL)

EMI

1. "Hallowed Be Thy Name" - 'The Number of the Beast' (1982)

The motherlode. The pinnacle. The greatest of them all. Steve Harris’ immortal tale of a man awaiting his fate at the gallows has passed into folklore as one of the greatest heavy metal songs of all time. An exquisite encapsulation of everything that made the ‘Number of the Beast’ line-up such an unstoppable force, the genius of “Hallowed” is in the relentlessness of its hooks, the band’s dizzying energy levels and the truly evocative and unsettling power of Harris’ lyrics. It’s a master class and a masterpiece. If those opening chimes don’t give you the chills, please hand in your metal license on the way out. (DL)

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